

Skincare guru Jennifer Brodeur moves office from big-city Montreal to Quebec's Eastern Townships



When COVID-19 hit, the mass exodus from cities to the countryside wasn't just limited to urbanites in search of fresh air and a good deal on a piece of property. Many lifestyle entrepreneurs such as Jennifer Brodeur were inspired to relocate themselves and their businesses to more bucolic settings. The founder of JB Skin Sävvi moved her head office from Montreal's Griffintown to a farm in Quebec's Eastern Townships in April.

For Brodeur, leaving the big city for a picturesque area 90 minutes away made sense both personally and professionally. "There was a time when I needed to be downtown because that's where everything happens. Now, I could be anywhere," she says.

Finding success in rural settings is a strategy that many of Brodeur's beauty industry peers have followed. Tata Harper bases her skincare empire in central Vermont, while Allison Audrey Weldon runs Sangre de Fruta Botanical on B.C.'s Bowen Island. Mary Futher's Kaia Naturals line is now developed in a refurbished barn in Caledon, Ont.

JB SKIN SÄVVI FEATURED ON THEGLOBEANDMAIL.COM

OCTOBER 5TH, 2021 | PROVIDED BY ZOÏ AGENCY

Brodeur says the decision to leave the city was as much about business as boosting her mental health, and the move coincided with a 2021 rebrand. Brodeur changed the name of her business from JB Skin Guru, the moniker bestowed on her by long-time client Oprah Winfrey, to JB Skin Sävvi, which is more reflective of Brodeur's MO of empowering her customers (her star roster also includes former U.S. first lady Michelle Obama and model Ashley Graham). "My way of doing things is always about, let's educate and you choose what's good for you," she says. "If this month your cleanser is Kiehl's or this month the cleanser is ours, you do you." She's also revamped her packaging to be more sustainable, starting with cardboard boxes that are carbon neutral, FSC certified and 100-per-cent recyclable.

Living on her property in an 1850s farmhouse has allowed Brodeur to incorporate local ingredients into limited-edition products. This fall, she released Le Masque Floräl, a powder formula containing wild chamomilla, calendula and cornflower petals. "The fact that I can wake up in the morning and look out at my test fields, it is the most satisfying feeling of this physical labour," she says. "I was missing that. Before, I was on a plane, at the office, on a plane, at the office. Now, I can go on my land and talk to my hydrangeas."

While Brodeur doesn't intend to grow all of her line's ingredients on her farm, she has big plans for her peonies. "We have 3,000 peony roots, with the goal of 15,000," she says. "It's going to be an ombre effect of colours, from white to blush to pink." The photogenic blooms will provide a picture-perfect backdrop for future events. Growing up in an era before Instagram and Pinterest dominated entertaining, Brodeur was inspired by the pages of Martha Stewart's magazine and had a life-long dream of designing and hosting beautiful parties, such as brunch in a field of flowers.

Now those fantasies have become reality. "I feel like I'm really, finally coming into my own space, owning my space, what I do and how I do it," she says.